



BIPARTISAN WILDFIRE CAUCUS

2021

END OF YEAR REPORT



**Rep. Joe Neguse,
Co-Chair**



**Rep. John Curtis,
Co-Chair**

Members: Tom O'Halleran, Doug LaMalfa, Peter DeFazio, Mike Simpson, Ann Kikrpatrick, Chris Stewart, Kurt Schrader, Dan Newhouse, Jimmy Panetta, Blake Moore, John Garamendi, Cliff Bentz, Josh Harder, Jamie Herrera Butler, Jim Costa & Liz Cheney.

ADVOCATING FOR BIPARTISAN, SCIENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS

The Bipartisan Wildfire Caucus was founded in early 2021 by Congressman Joe Neguse and Congressman John Curtis, following the record-setting and devastating 2020 wildfire season.

Goals of the Bipartisan Wildfire Caucus:

- Advocate for wildfire-related programs, including funding for disaster relief, prevention, and mitigation;
- Share federal relief programs and resources with communities before, during and after wildfire season; and
- Highlight balanced and bipartisan science-based wildfire management and mitigation proposals in Congress.

Year 1 Accomplishments:



Bipartisan staff briefings held with the U.S. Forest Service to educate Congressional staff on wildfire prevention, adaptation and recovery techniques

\$5.66 Billion

Secured for wildfire prevention programs in the House-passed FY2022 Appropriations bill. Members of the Bipartisan Wildfire Caucus led a letter to House Leadership in May calling for robust funding for critical wildfire preparedness, prevention and recovery programs.

WILDFIRE RECOVERY ACT

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES IN RECOVERY

Co-Chairs Neguse and Curtis introduced and passed through Committee H.R.1066 the Wildfire Recovery Act, a bipartisan bill to raise the federal cost-share for Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAG) and provide more federal resources to local communities working to recover from devastating wildfires.

After the record-setting 2020 wildfire season, many fires throughout the West, including the Cameron Peak, East Troublesome and Calwood fires in Colorado received Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAG), providing reimbursement for firefighting costs incurred fighting fires. If passed, the Wildfire Recovery Act would bring more federal dollars to recovery efforts on these fires and others throughout the country. Eligible reimbursements under this program may include expenses for field camps; use, repair and replacement of equipment; and mobilization and demobilization activities.

NEWS

Wildfire Recovery Act to be marked up Oct. 27



Scorched earth after the Grizzly Creek Fire moved through above Bear Ranch, Thursday Aug. 20, near Dotsen, Colo. (Chris Dillmann/Vail Daily via AP)

by: Dani Birzer

Posted: Oct 26, 2021 / 03:01 PM MDT / Updated: Oct 26, 2021 / 03:01 PM MDT

WASHINGTON – On Wednesday, Oct. 27, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will markup the **Wildfire Recovery Act**, introduced by Congressman Joe Neguse to support wildfire recovery efforts in Colorado and the rest of the U.S.

The act would increase federal cost flexibility for Fire Management Assistance Grants to bring in additional community resources as they recover from wildfire damage.

NEWS

House passes legislation aimed at supporting wildfire recovery efforts



FILE - In this Aug. 29, 2021, file photo, taken with a long camera exposure, the Caliber Fire burns in Eldorado National Forest, Calif. The 2-month-old California wildfire that threatened the Lake Tahoe resort region during the summer has been declared 100% contained. The fire reached the containment milestone late Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021. (AP Photo/Noah Berger, File)

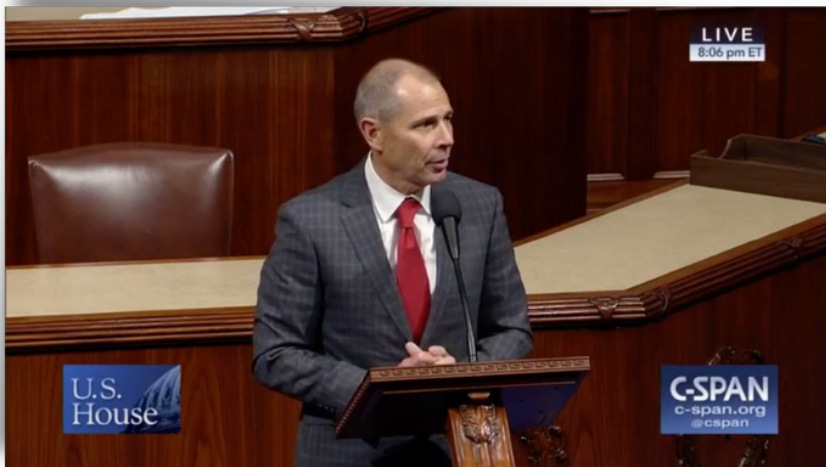
by: Jacob Rueda

Posted: Oct 28, 2021 / 12:36 PM MDT / Updated: Oct 28, 2021 / 12:52 PM MDT

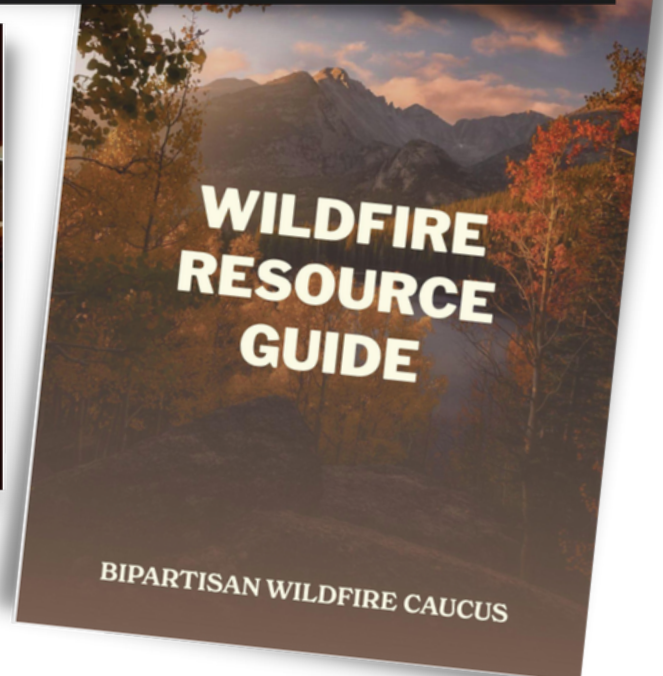
WILDFIRE RESOURCE GUIDE

As wildfires raged across the western U.S. in 2021, Chairs Neguse and Curtis issued a Wildfire Resource Guide to equip western communities with needed information on evacuations, safety tips and recovery. Neguse published his own, Colorado-specific guide in July 2021. The Guide includes information on how to prepare for evacuation, where to find local resources and how to replace federal documents if lost and more.

Co-Chair Joe Neguse hosted a statewide wildfire listening session to hear from Coloradans and experts on the path forward after Colorado's devastating 2020 wildfire season.



Co-Chair John Curtis spoke on the House floor to raise awareness about Utah's worst wildfire season and what he is doing to aid local communities in preventing fires.



SUPPORTING OUR FEDERAL FIREFIGHTING WORKFORCE

Tim Hart Wildland Firefighter Classification & Pay Parity Act

Co-Chair Neguse and Rep. Liz Cheney, a member of the Bipartisan Wildfire Caucus, introduced Tim's Act in September, comprehensive and bipartisan legislation to overhaul pay, benefits and classification for federal firefighters.

In the west, our wildland firefighters are on the frontlines of climate change, keeping communities safe while responding to extreme and hazardous conditions. These same firefighters are being pushed to their physical and mental limits. This makes recruitment and retention difficult and leaves us less prepared at critical times of the year. Named in honor of Tim Hart, a smokejumper who lost his life on a fire incident this year, Tim's Act is a comprehensive and widely supported effort to improve pay, ensure fundamental benefits, and recognize the unique conditions, skills, and qualification inherent to wildland firefighting. The bill would raise federal firefighter pay to at least \$57,000 annually, ensure comprehensive health care and mental health benefits, mental health leave, housing stipends, retirement benefits and properly classify wildland firefighters for the dangerous nature of their work.



As wildfires rage, lawmaker proposes legislation to raise firefighter pay

The bill would also provide funding for health care, paid leave, retirement benefits and housing assistance.



Neguse introduces bill seeking to reclassify federal wildland firefighters, boost pay and benefits

Bill has bipartisan support in the House



Neguse, Cheney team up to help out firefighters



SUPPORTING RESPONSIBLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission Act

Co-Chair Curtis and Rep. Tom O'Halleran, a member of the Bipartisan Wildfire Caucus, introduced the *Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission Act* in June and it was signed into law in November.

The Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission Act directs the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to partner with FEMA to establish a commission of federal and non-federal stakeholders—including city and county level representation—to study and recommend fire prevention, mitigation, management, and rehabilitation policies for forests and grasslands.

Current federal wildland fire policy is a patchwork of legislation and agency guidance across departments and jurisdictions, further complicated by mixed landownership. This law will require a review of the nation's wildland firefighting strategy, accompanied by specific policy recommendations, by a commission made up of the nation's top experts, including state and local stakeholders."

THE
RIPON ADVANCE

Romney, Curtis offer bipartisan, bicameral bill to upgrade federal wildland fire policy

2KUTV

Rep. John Curtis leads wildfire discussion with state lawmakers



IN THE NEWS

**THE
HILL**

Colorado lawmaker warns of fire season becoming year-round

 **DeseretNews.**

Fighting wildfires in the West: 'I don't think we can overdo anything'

Bipartisan caucus in Congress makes plea for more resources

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue | @Amyjoi16 | Updated Jul 16, 2021, 1:18pm MDT

VailDaily

On heels of worst wildfire season in state history, Congressman Neguse plans launch of Bipartisan Wildfire Caucus

KOLO 8
newsNOW abc

Bipartisan caucus tackles wildfire threat

SUMMIT DAILY

Congressional wildfire caucus pushes for better federal support

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